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P60V - Coup Aftermath

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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See also
P60V 15084SECRET

DECL: OADR

MEMORANDUM

RELEASED IN FULL

TO: ARA - Bernard Aronson

THROUGH: ARA - Phil McLean

FROM: ARA/AND - Anne Patterson

SUBJECT: Background and Agenda for Venezuelan PCC

The Policy Coordinating Committee on Latin America will meet to discuss ways to strengthen the elected government and democracy in Venezuela in the immediate future.

Attached please find a modified version of the background and agenda memoranda which has been transmitted to all agencies invited to the PCC on Venezuela. Material in regular type appears in the memoranda sent to all pcc members. **MATERIAL IN BOLD AND CAPS APPEARS ONLY IN YOUR COPY.**

DATE: Tuesday, March 10, 1992

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Department, ARA Conference Room, Room 6909

AGENDA:

I. Introduction

You

-- CAP MAY HAVE BOUGHT SOME TIME WITH HIS RECENT SPEECH IN WHICH HE ANNOUNCED REFORM MEASURES BUT CONSIDERABLE INSTABILITY REMAINS. ANONYMOUS LEAFLETS HAVE CALLED FOR MARCH 10 TO BE A DAY OF PROTEST. THERE IS STILL A REAL POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER, POSSIBLY SUCCESSFUL COUP BECAUSE OF DISCONTENT IN THE MID RANKS OF THE MILITARY AND LACK OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CAP.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
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- IN THE SHORT RUN, CAP IS MORE THREATENED BY ANOTHER COUP THAN BY HIS POLITICAL ISOLATION. OUR ABILITY TO HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON THE MILITARY IS LIMITED, BUT WE CAN MAKE CLEAR A COUP WILL HAVE IMMEDIATE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.
- OVER THE LONGER TERM, CAP'S ABILITY CONTROL THE PROCESS OF CHANGE DEPENDS ON HOW QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY HE IS PERCEIVED TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS HE ANNOUNCED. WE CAN HELP BY TAKING SOME STEPS TO BRING HIM POLITICAL BREATHING SPACE, AND BY ASSISTING HIM TO ATTACK STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS.
- IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE LOOK AT HOW, OVER TIME, WE CAN STRENGTHEN VENEZUELA'S DISTURBINGLY WEAK DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.
- I AM MORE THAN WILLING TO DISCUSS ANY IDEAS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH ANY OF YOU MAY HAVE.

II. Intelligence Briefing

INR

- (JIM BUCHANAN WILL BRIEF)

III. Discussion of Policy Options

All

(SEE DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM AT TAB A)

A) The immediate threat to Venezuelan democracy is the possibility of a military uprising. How do we encourage Venezuelan military leaders to support the elected government?

(1) Whether to send a high-level military official to Venezuela;

(2) Whether to find ways to engage Venezuelan military officers directly to support democracy. e.g. aggressively use military officers to make contacts; contact graduates of U.S. military schools

(3) How to communicate to the Venezuelan military our legal obligation to end military assistance and intention to end sales to the GOV in the event of a coup.

(4) Whether to use some or all of Venezuela's IMET monies for an "expanded IMET" program designed to encourage respect for civilian rule, and whether to seek additional IMET funds for this purpose.

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B) What steps can the USG take to strengthen CAP's political position?

(1) Whether and how to use Agency for International Development (AID) funds to support Venezuelan democracy.

(2) How to deal with Venezuelan expectations it will be a candidate for an early Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S.

(3) Whether to encourage the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to support Venezuelan democracy.

(4) Whether to encourage CAP to launch an international "good government" (anti-corruption) initiative.

(5) Whether to suggest to selected Venezuelan politicians that they not engage in activities which might inadvertently undermine the democratic system.

IV. Discussion Items

(SEE DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM AT TAB A)

To clarify the message we are now delivering to the Venezuelans, military and civilian, we should discuss what might be done if a coup were even partially successful. Although we do not believe the following are viable options in the Venezuelan context, they should be discussed by the PCC

A) Imposing a trade embargo against Venezuela in the event of a successful coup.

B) Freezing official Venezuelan assets in the U.S. in the event of a successful coup.

V. Summary and Recommendations

You

Attachments:

Tab A - List of invitees

Tab B - Background paper

Tab C - Discussion papers

Tab D - State assessment of embargoing Venezuelan oil

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